

**US DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL AND ADULT EDUCATION**

**EXEMPLARY CAREER GUIDANCE PROGRAM (2000)**

**PROGRAM NAME:** *Comprehensive School Counseling Program*

**LOCATION:** Grand Forks Public Schools  
Grand Forks, North Dakota

**POPULATION:** 8,552 students (K-12)

**CONTACTS:**

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**DESCRIPTION:** The comprehensive school counseling program is an integral part of the primary educational mission of the Grand Forks Public Schools. Its primary goal is to enhance student achievement and accomplishment. It assists students in acquiring and using life-long learning skills. More specifically, it provides career awareness, exploration, and planning; employs strategies to enhance academics, encourage self-awareness, foster interpersonal communication skills, develop employment readiness, and impart life skills for all students.

The program is proactive and preventive in focus. It is comprehensive and developmental in nature. It is systematic, sequential, clearly defined, delivered in collaboration with business and industry through a strong school/business partnership initiative, and accountable. The program ensures equal opportunity for all students to participate fully in the educational process by providing a vital link to the total instructional program of the school through the involvement of teachers, parents/guardian, administrators, community members, and students.

The school counseling program integrates academic, career and personal/social development. It reflects the progression of student development from K-12, and is delivered through the direct service program components of the guidance curriculum, individual planning, and responsive services. All program components are implemented by certified school counselors and an eleven-member Career Education staff. Counseling, consultation, collaboration, coordination, case management, guidance curriculum, and program evaluation are the primary delivery methods in the program.

In addition to the school district commitment, business/industry and parental support throughout the community are evident. A unique relationship has been established with the North Dakota Job Service whose counselors are located at each high school and provide search skills, job readiness skills, and student job placement based on individual career development goals.

Program innovations include: (1) serves ALL students; (2) utilizes unique staffing positions and patterns; (3) includes custom-designed curricular materials that incorporate developmentally appropriate approaches in curriculum delivery; (4) collaborates with the community including business, industry, organizations, and individual private citizens; and (5) establishes goal-driven business partnerships.

**PROGRAM EVALUATION:** The career guidance program was formally evaluated by the State during 1998-99. Some of the commendations include: (1) commitment to providing all students with career development activities; (2) establishing excellent partnerships and cooperative efforts within the community; (3) developing exceptional scope and sequence in the career development activities; (4) developing excellent written curriculum activities and the delivery of this curriculum in a group classroom model to all students; (5) developing excellent up-to-date resources and integrating these into each student's career development activities (*Choices and Career Explorer*) and (6) developing the student career portfolio system widely used by students.

Data from a variety of sources including surveys and conferences make the success and strength of the program evident. For example: 100% participation in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade career planning conference with a 87% rating of effectiveness; evaluation elements for the staff include development and implementation of a comprehensive team-taught Career Education curriculum for K-12, involvement of teachers in externships; for students include selection of classes with a greater awareness of how they relate to their future choices, awareness of the opportunities and resources available, etc.

**PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS:** Enhanced student achievement is evident in:

- Improvement of standardized test scores;
- Increased number of students taking college entrance exams;
- Higher enrollments in vocational technical courses;
- Successful completers of industry-level certified programs and exams;
- Greater community involvement in the program;
- Observable cooperation between ethnic groups;
- Improved school climate;
- Expressed confidence in making and carrying out transition plans;
- Staff awareness and responsibility in career education programs and activities;
- Involvement of parents in the career awareness, exploration, and planning process.